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## **EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM**

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### ***WHAT IS THE EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM?***

The Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) was set up by Congress to respond to emergencies created by natural disasters. It is designed to relieve imminent hazards to life and property caused by floods, fire, windstorms, and other natural occurrences. The purpose of EWP is to help individuals and groups of people with a common problem. All projects undertaken must be sponsored by the state or a political subdivision of the state, such as city, town, or soil and water conservation district. The United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is responsible for administering the program.

### ***IS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE?***

NRCS bears 75 percent of the construction cost of emergency measures. The remaining 25 percent must come from local sources, usually in the form of cash. In Limited Resource Areas NRCS can pay up to 90 percent of the construction cost.

### ***WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA FOR ASSISTANCE?***

All EWP work must reduce threats to life and property. Furthermore, it must be economically, socially and environmentally defensible and sound from an engineering standpoint. All work must represent the least expensive alternative.

### ***WHO IS ELIGIBLE?***

Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance, but must be represented by a project sponsor. The project sponsor must be a public agency of state, municipal government, or a special district.

### ***WHAT DOES THE SPONSOR HAVE TO DO?***

Sponsors are responsible for providing landrights to do repair work and securing the necessary permits. Sponsors are also responsible for furnishing the local cost share and for facilitating the installation of work. The work is typically done through federal contracts.

### ***WHAT KIND OF WORK CAN BE DONE?***

EWP work is not limited to any one set of prescribed measures. A case-by-case investigation of the needed work is made by NRCS. EWP work can include removing debris from stream channels, road culverts, and bridges; reshaping and protecting eroded banks; correcting damaged drainage facilities; reseeding damaged areas; and purchasing floodplain easements.



## ***WHAT CAN'T EWP DO?***

EWP funds cannot be used to solve problems that existed before the disaster or to improve the level of protection above that which existed prior to the disaster. EWP cannot fund operation and maintenance work, or repair private or public transportation facilities or utilities. EWP work cannot adversely affect downstream water rights, and EWP funds cannot be used to install measures not essential to the reduction of hazards. In addition, EWP funds cannot be used to perform work on measures installed by another federal agency.

## ***HOW DO I GET ASSISTANCE?***

If you feel your area has suffered severe damage and may qualify under the EWP Program, you are encouraged to contact your local soil and water conservation district, municipal officials, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, or local NRCS office. State and municipal governments are the most common sponsors of EWP projects. The sponsor's application should be in the form of a letter signed by an official of the sponsoring organization. The letter should include information on the nature, location, and scope of the problem for which assistance is requested. Information is available from NRCS offices to explain the eligibility requirements for the EWP Program. Send applications for assistance to your local [NRCS field office](#) or the [NRCS state office](#).



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